



Hanson Mayor.

*Cur' spetial' tent' die Dominico scil. xxiii.
die Martii 1672. Annoq; Regni Regis
CAROLI Secundi Angliæ, &c.
xxv.*

IT is Ordered by this Court, that
MR. LAMBE be desired to Print
his SERMON this day Preach-
ed at the *Guild-Hall* Chappel before
my Lord Mayor and Aldermen.

WAGSTAFFE.





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A
SERMON

Preached before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE

Lord Mayor,

And the
COURT of ALDERMEN,

AT
GUILD-HALL Chappel

Upon the 23. of March 1673.

BEING
PALM SUNDAY:

By JOHN LAMBE M. A.
And late Student of Sydney Colledge Cambridge.

LONDON,
Printed by T. R. and N. T. for Robert Boulter
at the *Turk's Head* over against the Royal Exchange. 1673.

SERMON

PREACHED BY

THE REV. J. H. HAYES

AT THE CHURCH OF THE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH


ON SUNDAY

MAY 10, 1880

THE TOPICAL

To the Right Honourable
S^{IR} Robert Hanson
LORD MAYOR
O F
LONDON,
A N D
To the Right Worshipful
The **COURT** of
ALDERMEN.

Right Honourable, and Right Worshipful.

 His Sermon preached before your Lordship, and your Worshipps, had never been exposed to publick view, but in pure obedience to your repeated Orders; unto which I intended
(as

[]
(as I was bound in duty) a more sudden
and speedy compliance; but the inter-
vention of *Easter week*, wherein the
Press kept Holiday, I hope will be my
sufficient excuse: But now that it is come
forth, it humbly begs your Patronage;
and I hope it is not at all improper for
such as my self, who are making their
first attempts in the study of Divi-
nity, to endeavour to fix this Truth in
the minds both of themselves & others.
That Christianity is highly reasonable.
Such I have here represented it to Your
Lordship, and Your Worships, and
am,

Right Honourable, and Right Worshipful,

Your most Obliged,

and

Most Obedient Servant,

J. LAMBE.



A SERMON Preached before
the Right Honourable the Lord
Mayor, &c,

2. Theſ. 3. 2.

*And that we may be delivered from Unreasonable
and Wicked Men ; for all Men have not Faith.*

The Chapter begins thus,

*Finally Brethren, Pray for us, That the Word
of the Lord may have free Courſe, and be Glo-
rified even as it is with You ; and that we
may, &c.*



When God had finiſhed the Fa-
brick of this World, and had
Formed innumerable Living
Creatures to dwell thereon, He
at laſt Created Man to be Lord
and Ruler of them all : Whom He alſo Dig-
nified above the reſt of the viſible Creation,

Gen. 1. 26.

B

by

by making Him like Himself, by Adorning his Person with a reasonable Soul, a noble Understanding, a distinguishing Judgment, and a free Will. Wherefore, that these noble Faculties might not be wholly useless, in the Grand concernment of his Religion, God hath ever vouchsafed to Rule and Govern him after an Intelligible, and a Rational manner. And hence it is, that God doth so often appeal to the Children of Israel concerning the Equity of his Commands, and the Justice of His Proceedings with them: Nor is the case now altered under the Dispensation of the Gospel; our Saviour came not to Plant an *Arbitrary unaccountable* Religion amongst us; but, on the contrary, (since He found the World was grown Old enough to understand it, and fit to embrace it.) He came to Improve our Reason, and our Religion too, to the highest Pitch; To fill up the Vacancies, and lop off the Superfluities of it; and almost wholly to reduce it to matters of Eternal Obligation, and Indispensible Necessity. Wherefore our Saviour, and after Him the Apostles, did not insist alone upon the *Power, Authority, and Sovereignty* of God that sent them: but also upon the Reason of the thing, and the right of the case; being always ready to hear what any Adversaries, whether

Ezek. 18.
24. 29.
Ezek. 33.
17, 20.
Isa. 5. 4.

Luke 12.
57.
Acts 18. 4.

whether Jews or Greeks, from revealed or natural knowledge, could object against those Doctrines which they had taught. St. Luke, Acts 17. 2. saith, That *Paul* reasoned with the Jews Three Sabbath Days in the Synagogue; and that it was his manner so to do. Thus also with Heathens, v. 18. And 'tis remarkable that with these weapons of *reason* and *discourse* they Conquered all Opposers who had not the Shield and Buckler of Irrationality, and Clamour to defend them from Submission and Modesty: And such as these were the principal Men who daunted the courage of the Apostles, and repelled the violence of their keenest Darts. But innumerable Companies of these there were in all those Cities and Countries where the Apostles endeavoured to Plant the Gospel. And these are the Men of whom my Text reports. That they had not Faith, that is, they were not of the Christian Perswasion and Belief; and St. *Paul* in my Text gives us the causes of their Infidelity. First, Because they were Unreasonable. Secondly, Because they were Wicked. *And that we may be delivered from Unreasonable and Wicked Men; for all Men have not Faith.*

These two words *ἀνὴρ* (which signifies Debauched and Wicked) and *ἀπίστος* (which signifies Men of no Topicks; such as will stick

to no Propositions ; and is most properly rendered Absurd and Prodigiously Unreasonable) may most properly refer to two sorts of People ; The latter to the Unbelieving *Jews* ; The other to the sensual *Gnosticks*.

2 Tim. 1.

The *Jews* were proof against all Argument, and Submitted themselves to be wholly Governed by Prejudice and Passion ; who would never debate the Controversie with a free Judgment ; but, on the contrary, when the Apostles began to Preach, then they endeavoured to Inrage the People against them ; that so by Violence and Tumult they might procure their Ruine.

Acts 17. 5.
13.

2 Tim. 1.

The other were the Sensual and Wicked *Gnosticks* ; who endeavoured by all the Arts and Pretensions they could invent, to Reconcile Christianity with a Wicked Life ; and the stedfast belief of the Gospel, with a Cowardly Compliance, with any Adversaries, whensoever their Lives or Fortunes lay at Stake. These therefore did Oppose the Apostles wherever they came, in all their Discourses of Intensive Holyness, and Christian Patience, taking up the Cross, suffering Torment and Death it self for Christ and the Gospels sake ; and having the advantage of Mens Natural Inclinations, and worse Habits, they Converted Swarms of Profelytes

Jud. v. 18.
19.
2 Tim. 3.
1.

Gal. 6. 12.
Phil. 3. 18.

Profelytes to their own most filthy Doctrines ;
 and thereby hindred the Reception and Enter-
 tainment of that most Holy Faith, which the
 Apostles had both Learnt themselves & Taught
 to others. Wherefore St. *Paul* desires the
 Church, that in order to the progress of the
 Christian Religion, he may meet with Persons
 whose Qualifications are quite different from
 these Men ; that is to say, that he may meet
 with Persons who are willing to be perswaded
 by Argument, and desire impartially to Weigh
 Propositions in the Ballance of their Under-
 standings. And that he may find them also
 of an upright mind, endowed with probity and
 honesty of disposition ; such who are as the
 Apostle styles them, *πειρασμένοι*, foredisposed to Act. 13. 48.
Eternal Life. Now unto all such as these who
 are Rational Men, and Virtuoussly inclined,
 the Apostle doubteth not but the Doctrine
 which he Preacheth will be acceptable ; That
 the Word of the Lord will have free Course,
 and be Glorified as it was in the Church of
Thessalonica. And this I take to be the mean-
 of the Words ; And, thus explained, they af-
 ford us these two Propositions.

First, That to Embrace the Christian Reli-
 gion is highly agreeable to the Dictates of
 Right Reason. First,

First,

Secondly.

Secondly, That the Christian Religion is a most Holy and Pure Religion. For if nothing but want of Reason and Judgment, Goodness and Integrity can hinder the Progress and Glorification of this Gospel: then both these Propositions clearly follow; the latter whereof being self-evident, I shall wholly insist upon the former, *viz.* That to Embrace the Christian Religion is highly Agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason; And this will sufficiently appear to be true when we have considered these three things.

1. Its Author and Original.
2. The Religion it self.
3. The ultimate end and scope thereof as it relates to us, with the natural tendency of the means propounded to attain that end.

First,

First, If we consider its Author and Original.

That there is a God we take for granted in all discourses of Religion; whereof his Being and Existence is the Foundation. Now if there be a God that is a Being infinitely perfect, then a little Reason will be sufficient to instruct us, (that since we find in our selves so many Imperfections; insomuch, that we are sometimes most deceived in our own Choice, and our own Judgments, through false Appearances

ances, and Misapprehensions of things, even then when we think our selves most sure) that we submit our selves to be guided by Him in all our affairs, especially in so grand a concernment as our Religion is: For God is our Maker, and therefore may command us; He is infinitely Wise, and therefore knows best what is good for us. He is infinitely Good, and therefore designs our Happiness. He is Omnipotent, and therefore can Effect it. He is infinitely Gracious, and therefore will not make the Conditions on our part too difficult to be done, or intolerable to be born. He is infinitely Gracious, and therefore will assist our Endeavours, pass by our Imperfections, and at last reward our Labour. Those then do Act like Rational Men, who Believe what God Reveals, and Practice that which God Commands; and Confidently Expect and Hope for that which God hath promised; because in so doing, we prefer Wisdom it self before Ignorance and Folly; Infinite Perfection before that which is less then nothing. Upon this account it is highly Reasonable to embrace the Christian Religion; since God hath been pleased to give us all the Demonstration, whereof the thing is capable, to Convince and Satisfie us that He himself is the Author of it.

For,

1. He

He sent his only begotten Son from Heaven to Earth on purpose to Reveal this Doctrine to us, and gave Him Power in his Lifetime to Vindicate his Divine Commission by *Imnumerable, Eminent, and undeniable Miracles*: And before his Death, as a *Token* and *Sign* of the Truth of His Doctrine, He promiſeth to riſe again from the Dead within three Days; and is content the Credit of his Doctrine ſhould depend upon it. Now God having been pleaſed to Effect our Saviours Word, and to Raiſe Him from the Dead, as Chriſt foretold. His Reſurrection proved all His Doctrines to come from God, and His Miracles to be True Miracles, againſt all reaſonable Objections. And the Apoſtle *St. Paul* upon this Ground, maketh no Scruple to conclude with the greateſt Assurance Imaginable, *Rom. i. 4.* That Chriſt by His Reſurrection, was by the Spirit of Holyness, mightily declared to be the *Son of God*. And well he might,

1. For what can be more Senſeleſs, then to Imagine that God would ſuffer the Token of a Grand Impoſtor to come to paſs? What can be more contradictory to the Wiſdom of God, then thus to Countenance one who Rivall'd his own Perfections, and pretended an Equality with Himſelf.

2. What

Heb. 12. 25

Joh. 3. 31,

34.

Joh. 3. 18,
1.

What can be more Repugnant to the Divine Goodness, in respect of us, who by his own rule are bound to believe a Prophet whose Token comes to pass, unless his Doctrine be apparently Wicked or Idolatrous, *Deut.* 18. v. last?

3. What can be more contrary to the Justice of God? Whose Threatnings and Denunciations against Impostors are so severe, and the Punishments formerly as duely Executed; as appears in the fearful end of *Abab* the Son of *Kolajab*, and *Zedekiah*, two False Prophets; and the Entailment of a curse upon their Issue? What therefore can be more absurd, then to Imagine God to be so regardless both of His Word and Honour, and also of His Peoples Good, as to make himself the Instrument of their Ruine and Seduction; to drive and force them from Him, who are (as He oft complains) too apt to forsake Him of their own Accords. *Jer.* 29. 21
22, 23.

But this is not all the Demonstration that we have of our Saviours Divine Commission, it hath been also Attested by the Voice of the Prophets of Old, (For to him saith *St. Paul*, *Gave all the Prophets Witness*) all whose Marks and Tokens, which were Universally received as relating to the *Messias*, were fulfilled *Act.* 10. 43.
Act. 13. 29.

C filled

filled in him, *Acts* 13. 29. telleth us further, that they took Him not down from the Cross until *all things were fulfilled* that were Written of Him. And therefore our Saviour and the Apostles, as those Marks became fulfilled in Christ, were wont to urge them to the *Jews* with this Preamble, That this or that was done, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, &c.* Which they would never have done, but that they knew the *Jews* themselves, both received and taught them to be tokens of the *Messias*; because otherwise their Argument would not have been so much as *Argumentum ad Hominem*.

Thirdly, God hath further attested our Saviour to be sent from Him by the Voice of His Ambassadors, the holy Angels; Who first appeared to *Zachary*, to tell him that his Wife was to be the happy Mother of *Elias*, the fore-runner of the *Messias*: And then to the Blessed Virgin, to inform her of that mighty Favour which was designed unto her, that out of her Womb should Issue the Saviour of Mankind. And after that to *Joseph* in a Dream, to remove his Jealousies, and retrieve her Reputation; by discovering unto him that which was conceived in her was of the holy Ghost. And, last of all, to the Shepherds after His

Mat. 1. 23.

Mat. 2. 1.
to 6.

Mat. 4. 12.
to 16.

Mat. 21. 5.

Joh. 13. 18

Mat. 27. 35

Luke 1. 13
17.

Luke 1. 26

Mat. 1. 20.

His Birth, to tell them these joyful Tidings, Luke 2.9.
That unto them was Born a Saviour. And
 as this was heretofore an ordinary way of Re- Gen. 22.11
 velation amongst the *Jews*; so it was also
 of great Credibility, insomuch that *Zachary* Exod. 3.2.
 was stricken Dumb; because he did not pre- Judg. 12.6.
 sently believe the Message of an Angel: Luke 1.20
 notwithstanding, it seemed to be Naturally
 Impossible.

4. God hath also Declared our Saviour to
 be sent from Him by the Voice of the holy
 Spirit, in Just and Holy Persons: Which way
 of Revelation of Gods Will, as it was ordina-
 ry, so was it of great Force amongst the
Jews; and by them it was called רוח הקודש the
 holy Spirit, which was a kind of Raptur or
 Extasie, which Holy Men were sometimes cast
 into, and whatsoever they then spoke, was
 by the standers by, accounted the Oracles or
 Mind of God. Thus also hath our Saviour
 been declared to be the True *Messiah*, the
 Prophet that came from God: As appears by
 these Examples:

1. When the Blessed Virgin perceived her
 self to be with Child, she made hast to be
 the glad Messenger of this Heavenly News to
 her Cousin *Elizabeth*; who rejoyced at the
 sight of the B. V. and *Being filled with the Ho-*

ly Ghost, Luke 1. 41. she spake with a loud Voice, saying, Blessed art thou amongst Women, &c. And Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which was told her of the Lord, viz. That out of her Womb should come the Saviour of the World.

And Secondly, *Mary* answered her Cousin with an Extatick Hymn of Praise, That God had now performed the Promise to *Abraham* and his Seed for ever; That is, That the Promised *Messias* so long expected, would shortly come into the World.

And Thirdly, At the Circumcision of *John the Baptist, Luke 1. 67. Zacharias* was filled with the Spirit, and he Sang a Hymn of praise to the same Effect; wherein he testifies that the Saviour was now coming, and that the Promises to *Abraham* were shortly to be fulfilled, as you will find in the following Verses.

And Fourthly, When our Saviour was Born, and the Days of his Mothers Purification were accomplished. When according to Custom He was brought into the Temple with the accustomed Offering; there meets Him good Old *Simeon, Who being filled with the Holy Ghost*, took Jesus into his Arms, and was most willing to die, since He had lived to see

see the Salvation of *Israel*, &c. *Luke* 2. 25. *vid.* Thus hath the Voice of God in the Unspotted Virgin, in the Blameless Couple, in Devout *Simeon* declared our Saviour to be the great *Messiah*; the Prophet which came from God. And we may observe that all these Persons which did thus Testifie concerning our Saviour, were Recorded and Commended for Piety and Goodness; which was the Qualification requisite to render their Extatical Revelations Authentical and Credible amongst the People. But this way of Revelation, with divers others, ceased with our Saviour; because it became useless after God had declared his whole Mind and Will by our Saviour and the Apostles; and caused it to be Written. Heb. 1. 1.

5. God hath still more plainly declared our Saviour to be sent from Him by His own immediate Voice from Heaven, which by the *Jews* was called בְּתִקְוָה the Daughter of Voice or Thunder. Thus, both at our Saviours Baptism, and His Transfiguration, There came a Voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my Beloved Son, Hear ye Him.* And when he came to Dye, He Prayed his Father to Glorifie Him; And his Prayer was Answered by an Audible Voice, *I have both Glorified thee, and I will*
Glo-

Glorifie thee again. The two former gave Him Authority to Preach, and us Authority to hear his Doctrine. The latter approves of what he hath said, and Demonstrates unto us that he hath not Exceeded his Commission ; that is, that our Saviour hath taught us no more then what he had Received from the Father. And Jesus himself, after his departure hence (when, had he been an Impostor, he should have been in Hell) surrounds St. Paul with Brightness, and saith unto him, *Why persecutest thou me?* Which Revelation was of so much Force and Power with him : Notwithstanding he was prejudiced against the Religion beforehand, that he now becomes a most Zealous promoter of it ; and at last Esteems it his chiefeſt Honour to lay down his Life in Attestation of this Truth.

Acts 9:3.

6. Unto all this let be added in the last place, That Jesus Christ had the Spirit of Propheſie in his own Person, whereby he foretold abundance of things, all which came to paſs accordingly : For (besides the prophecy of his own Death and Reſurrection, fulfilled the third Day) he foretold the famous coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apoſtles after his Aſcenſion. And accordingly it came to paſs on the day of *Pentecoſt*, to the Wonder and Amazement

Luk. 24:49

Acts 1. v.
3. 4. 7.

mazement of all Men. He foretold the Destruction of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem*. The Scattering of the *Jews*. The progress of the Gospel, And many other things, All which are come to pass.

Mat. 24.2.
Luk. 19.43
Mat. 24.14

Nothing therefore but prodigious Absurdity and Unreasonableness can hinder the Entertainment of this Religion, which Undoubtedly and Undenyably hath God himself for the Author of it.

And so we pass on to the second Consideration, *viz.* The Religion it self, and I doubt not but we shall find it worthy to be embraced by rational Men; whether we consider those things it requires us to believe, to practice, or to expect hereafter.

Secondly.

I. That which it requires us to believe, which is either matters of Fact, or propositions of pure Faith.

First, Matters of Fact, as what our Saviour did and Taught, how he was Born, how he Lived, and how he Died, &c. All which we have as much reason to believe, as that *Julius Cesar* was Killed in the Senate, or that *Marcus Tullius Cicero* was an Oratour at Rome; or any other History whatsoever: Yea, and far more, since this was never contradicted, but universally confessed by the Adversaries of this

this Religion, who lived at the same time, and would have been glad of the least Advantages, if they could but have found any considerable mistakes.

Or else Secondly, Propositions of Pure Faith ; either relating unto our selves, as the Immortality of our Souls, the Resurrection of our Bodies, and a future Judgment : Or relating unto our Saviour, either in respect of his Natures, or the relation which he bears to God. To which we may add the Duties which are consequent upon these Propositions, as relying upon him, trusting in him, and putting up our Prayers to God the Father in his Name, &c. All which I refer to the former Consideration ; since it is enough in Reason to Justifie our assent to any Proposition, and our consent to the Practice of any Duty ; if we are but undoubtedly sure that God hath plainly revealed ; and commanded both the one and the other ; Notwithstanding , we should not be able to comprehend the Notion of the former, or understand the reason of the latter. And all this doth arise from this undeniable Principle ; That what God saith, must needs be true ; and what God Commands, His Creatures are obliged to do.

And

And so we go on to consider the second part of the Religion it self, (*viz.*) What it requires of us to Practice.

The Commands of the Gospel are either those which are of External Necessity, or those of External Institution.

Those which are of Eternal Necessity are therefore reasonable ; because they are always good, and tend to preserve and enoble our Beings : Because they do arise from the Nature of things , and those Relations which we bear unto God, and to one another. And because without the practice of these Duties it were impossible we should ever attain to that which every Plant, and every Creature doth Aspire unto, *viz.* That Happiness and that Perfection whereof it is Capable.

Who can doubt the truth of these three Propositions ?

1. That it is our Interest and our Happiness First, to preserve our Bodies from Diseases, and our Minds from Madnes and Diliriums.

2. That it is better to be in Friendship and Secondly, Amity with all the World, by the practice of unspotted Righteousness and a constant Charity, then to be at continual Discord with our Neighbours, and disturb Society by the want of these : Especially since their Natural Power

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over

over us is as great as we can pretend to have over them; and theirs may be accidentally greater.

Thirdly,

3. That it is both our Duty and our Interest to pay unto God all the immediate Worship which he requires of us, both out of a principle Love and Gratitude; because He made us what we are, and is also able to do yet more for us; and out of a principle of Fear, since if we slight Him, He can presently reduce us to nothing, or (which is worse) continue us Miserable.

Yet to one of these three are all the Precepts of the Gospel to be referred (excepting only those few of which I shall treat anon.) There is nothing else required of us to do, but what relates to the immediate Worship of God, or to our own Wellfare, as we are single, or in community; nor there is any thing (throughout the whole New Testament) forbidden, but what doth apparently, or by consequence tend to make us unhappy in one of these Relations. And this is the same account which St. Paul gives us, Tit 2. 12. *The grace of God (that is) the Gospel hath appeared to all Men, Teaching or Commanding us to deny all Ungodlines and Worldly lust, and to Live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World, &c.*

The

The Equity therefore of these Commands doth appear in this, that if we our selves had been permitted to chuse the Laws by which we would be governed; we must either have chosen those unto which we are now obliged, or we must have embraced Unhappiness and Misery; since that only is our Duty, which is also our Interest and Felicity. There is nothing which ever was or can be, with any show of Reason, objected against those Precepts of our Saviour, whereof we are now discoursing; excepting only those which concern the restraint of our thoughts, the forgiveness of injuries, and the love of our Enemies. Yet these are so far from being unreasonable, that thus to do is incomparably our wisest way. As for the first, it is so far from being an Act of Severity, that it is a great Instance of our Saviours Wisdom, Humanity and Love; For had He forbid Adultery, and yet given liberty to Lascivious Thoughts; both His Wisdom as a Law-giver, and His Goodness as a Friend, had been justly liable to Exception; because He would have forbid the Vice, and yet have indulged us in the use of those means which naturally tend to produce it; which is equally irrational, as to command a Duty, and at the same time forbid us the use of those means by which we

should be enabled to perform it : But besides, it is one of the first Principles we understand, to remove our selves as far as ever we can from any thing which we apprehend to be Evil or Destructive ; and this is the rule we naturally walk by, both in respect of Persons and Things. Wherefore it follows , that were we but thoroughly apprehensive of the Evil Nature of Sin, and the danger of coming near it ; we, of our own accords, would stifle this Viper in the Womb, whether our Saviour had commanded it or no. As for the other, that Noble and Generous Precept of forgiveness, (where we are not obliged by our Office, or in Conscience to punish the Offender) is so far from being unreasonable, that it founded upon undeniable Axioms ; which even those who remonstrate to the Duty, must be forced to Assent unto : As, First, That no Man in Reason or Equity should be *Plaintiff, Witness, Judge and Executioner* in the same cause ; especially since every Man is naturally apt to be partial in his own concernments : Yet thus doth he who takes upon him to revenge an injury. Again, Secondly, To molest and hurt another when we can promise no *advantage* to our selves thereby, is contrary to all Sense and Prudence ; we are not wont to do it to a
Dog,

Dog, or if we do, it is Cruelty. But Thirdly, It is yet more contrary to the Reason of a Man, to hurt another when we can Prudently promise nothing to our selves thereby but mischief : Yet those who revenge an Injury, do Exasperate those Irascible Passions ; the mischievous effects whereof they have already felt ; which is no better then to vex and inrage that Serpent, who without the least provocation Stung them before. And as to forgive, so to Love our Enemies is highly agreeable to right reason : First, Because it is the most probable way to obtain the Victory and Conquest over them. Rom. 12. And thus Civility to a Conquered Prince, did once unite two differing Empires. And *Tertullian* telleth us, that by the exercise of this Grace, the first Christians found it at length a difficult matter to obtain Martyrdom for want of an Executioner. But Secondly, By the practice of this Virtue we assimilate the Deity, (which according to the general sense of Mankind) is our chiefest Happiness. And it is our Saviours own Argument in the same case, *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.* Mat. 5. last And thus have I shown, that those precepts of the Gospel which are propounded as eternally good, are really so ; and therefore necessary and reasonable to be performed by us.

And

And now if we consider those which are therefore necessary to be done by us, only because they are commanded, we shall find that they are also reasonable.

1. Because they are but few in number.
2. Because they are Obvious and Significant in their Nature.
3. Because they are advantagious to the grand designs of Religion in their use. Now this is enough to render any *Humane*, much more *Divine Institutions* reasonable.

First, Because they are but few in number. That they are so is evident, since they are but just a number, *Two*. (I speak of the Ritual Institutions) the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lords Supper. Now, that this renders them reasonable will appear from hence, *viz.* That in all Religions there must be some; but yet from the nature of the thing, and by the universal experience of all Mankind, it hath been found that too many of them drowns Religion in right and shadow. This Argument will be brighter if we look into the Religions of the World when our Saviour came. God was forced to Hedge in the *Jews* by the Pomp and Gaiety of outward Worship, thereby to prevent their Apostacy from Him to other Religions; The Splendor of whose External Solemnities

nities would have had so strong an influence upon their juvenile senses and affections, that they would have been more apt for, and inclined upon all occasions to Idolatry ; but yet they were so numerous, and hard to be remembered ; so difficult to be done, and intolerable to be born ; and the punishment of their neglect so severe, that St. *Peter* complains of the Legal Institutions as a Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear. And as the *Jews* to the *Heathens* throughout the World did abound in Rite and Ceremony, as were easie to be shown ; insomuch that when our Saviour came, Internal Religion was wholly lost or clouded. But He was so far from continuing or increasing their number, that on the contrary, it was one chief part of His Business to Spiritualize Religion, to release us from our Fetters, and to reduce us to our primæval state of Liberty. Wherefore the Institutions which he hath appointed, or rather, those two, of many, which He hath continued, are therefore reasonable, because they are but few. Act. 15. 10

Especially if we consider in the second place that they are Obvious and Significant in their Nature. Nothing more justly renders an Institution obnoxious then Insignificancy. Either
when

when there is no relation between the Sign and the thing to be thereby signified : Or else, when the thing represented is not worth remembrance, or a meer Chimæra, (as the Fornications at the Heathen Solemnities in commemoration of the Conjunctions between their fancied Gods and Goddeses. Or Thirdly, when the signification of a reality, or a Duty is so Mystical and Clouded that it cannot presently, and naturally be discerned. These are likely to leave but cold Impressions upon the mind.

But the Institutions of the Gospel are plainly significant, both of our chiefest Duties ; and our greatest Priviledges ; and are naturally apt to signifie what they intend.

1. The Sacrament of Baptism or washing with Water ; both in its own Nature, as also by the general sense of Mankind, doth signifie Purification and Cleansing : And was also used to the same purpose both by *Jews* and *Heathens*, in publick, at the Initiation of Profelytes, in token that they should forsake the filth of their former ways ; and also in private whensoever they apprehended themselves to be polluted.

2. The Holy Mystery of our Saviours Supper was intended as a Rite of Joy and Gladness,

ness, which could not be better expressed then by the participation of Bread and Wine, which ever were, and are still the constant Appendages of Festivity in all the Countreys of the World. It was intended also as an Expression and Representation of our Saviours Death and Passion, and an Admonition of our Covenant, Relation to God, and that Union, Love and Charity which we ought to have one towards another. Now what would be more natural to express the former then the breaking of Bread, and the pouring out of the Wine? And what could be better to express the latter? since Eating and Drinking at the Table of God is a natural token of Love and Friendship between God and one another: which rye is of it self sufficient to ingage us to the performance of Gods Commands, and an universal Charity. But besides, it is also a natural, because a universally received manner of entring into, or renewing any solemn Vow or Covenant. And as from the natural congruity between the Sign and the thing signified. So Secondly, From the great advantage which accrues to us by the due reception of those holy Mysteries will it farther appear that they are reasonable. By the former we are made Christians, the Children of God, and Heirs of Eternal Life. By the

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latter

latter we are strengthened against sin, and confirmed in all those graces we have begun ; and by both together we have all those good things which our Saviour purchased upon the Cross, in general made over to our particular persons, provided we keep the conditions of the Covenant on our part to be performed. The Institutions of Men can at the best be only Monitory ; but these are Operative and Efficacious. Would you therefore be convinced that the Institutions of our Saviour are reasonable, do but perform the Duties required on your part, and then your Senses and Faculties being fill'd with the pleasure and comfort of them, will soon inform you.

And so we go on to consider the last part of the Religion it self, *viz.* The Promises and Threatnings which are annexed to the performance or the neglect of the Commands thereof.

Promises and Threatnings in all Constitutions both Divine and Humane, have been the constant concomitants of Commands ; & that it should be so, is founded upon the highest reason ; because without these no Law-giver can rationally expect Obedience. For if Men were apt and willing to perform the Duties commanded, then were there no need of Laws to bind them, no more then there is of an Act of
Par.

Parliament to command the hungry, weary Traveller to eat or sleep. But if Men are unruly and troublesome (as the generality of mankind are) then what do Laws with rewards and punishments signify in order to the ends of Government, more then the perswasions of Friends or the discourses of ordinary Men. These therefore in all constitutions are essentially requisite. Now then, that the promises and threatnings of the constitution of the Gospel are reasonable, comes now in order to be proved.

And first, The promises of the Gospel are highly reasonable. There are but two things can render the promise of a future reward unequal, and our performance of the condition, with an eye to the reward, simple and irrational; First, When it is so small that it bears no proportion to the work. Secondly, When it is so great that it is incredible it should ever be performed unto us; that is, when we have not good security that we shall receive our Wages upon the finishing of our Work. But

1. The rewards promised in the Gospel are infinitely beyond our work; and what in reason or equity can we desire more? The work it self is Wages according to the sense of the best Philosophers, and of all good Christians. But God was not pleased to think this enough, He

hath prepared a Heaven to gratifie the Souls of those who by the Divine Life have made themselves capable of Bliss and Happiness; where there shall be an External absence of all ills, and a continual confluence of every thing that is good. Here are no Ænigmatical Fables of Elysium shades, or Platonick Love. Nothing can be plainer revealed, then that our Souls shall be exalted, our Reasons uneclipsed, our Understandings bright and clear, our Wills complying, our Affections strong and regular, and our Bodies Glorified. And is not this sufficient to render, no only the promises themselves, but our most industrious pursuance of them reasonable, according to the common rules of Profit and Loss.

1 Cor. 13.
12.

Phil. 3. 21.

1 Pet. 1. 8.
Gal. 6. 4.
Prov. 14.
14.

But Secondly, We are fully assured that if we perform the Duty required of us, we shall be made partakers of them. And that first by Sense, because we have an Antepast thereof before-hand. The pleasure and peace of a holy Life is but Heaven in other words; there is nothing wanting to make it perfect, but the Soul's dismissal out of this earthly Prison, where, for the present, it is so pent up that it cannot act as it will do when it hath room enough in the Heavenly Paradise; where it shall be so filled vvith Joy and Pleasure, that there

there shall be nothing which it can desire, but it shall enjoy ; which is the essence and formality of Happiness. But Secondly, We are as well secured by reason as by sense : For God himself hath told us so by His Son Christ Jesus, who came out of His bosom, & knew all things; Joh. 1. 18 who had himself been a partaker of this Glory Joh. 15. 5. from the beginning ; and therefore was the best able to inform us : Who was of an unstained integrity ; in whose mouth was never any guile found, and therefore it is rational to believe Him. So that to question the performance of these promises, is to charge the Almighty God with Falsehood ; which no Man can do who believes there is one. God hath promised, and He will most certainly perform. He is truth it self, and therefore will ; He is omnipotent, & therefore can. His Goodness caused Him at first to make the promises of the Gospel, which St. Peter calleth exceeding great & precious Promises ; but now His Wildom, Justice and Fidelity do all stand bound to see them performed. 1 Pet. 2. 22 Isa. 53. 9. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

2. And as the Promises, so also the Threatnings of the Gospel are highly reasonable, both those which relate to this life, and those which relate to the other. Of the first sort are these, That Tribulation and Anguish, Trouble and Sorrow, shall be the constant concomitants of Isa. 57. 20. 21.

Sin

Sin and Wickedness, &c. And what can be more reasonable? not only if we consider the nature of Sin, and consequently the disparity between the offence and punishment which makes it very favourable; but also if we observe what an instance of mercy it is in God, by our present temporal punishments, to prevent our Souls everlasting ruine. And this is the true intention and design thereof (where the grace of God is not wholly withdrawn) even to awaken us out of *the death of Sin, to the life of Righteousness*. And this must needs be reasonable from this undeniable truth, that he is my true friend who saves my Life, though it be by the breaking of a Bone.

Heb. 12. 11

Joh. 3. 29.
Mat. 25. 46

But when this Life is ended, the Gospel threatneth, that those who will not be brought to Obedience by all those arts and methods of Wisdom, Justice & Mercy, which God hath used unto them, shall *themselves for ever live* to be punished with exquisite and intolerable Torments, which shall also be everlasting. And this, (though it may seem unequal) is very reasonable. For,

1. There was a necessity that it should be thus in order to the bringing to pass His great designs of mercy, *viz.* the Salvation of all Men. And is not this reasonable, that God should use all

all the ways he can to make us happy? God foresaw the perverseness of the humane nature was such, that there was no hopes to work upon it, had not His threatnings been thus severe. And we our selves perceive it in the event, that notwithstanding they are so terrible, yet Men will not be scared out of the practice of their Vices; Whence it evidently follows, that not so much the Justice and Severity, as the Goodness and Wisdom of God were engaged to have made them more severe if it had been possible; His goodness, because we find *de facto*, that as they are, such is the horrid depravity of the humane nature: they are not effectual to fright us into the Regions of Felicity. His Wisdom to prevent the pleas of sinners at the day of Judgment; who might have murmured against the Almighty, and have said unto Him, if you had told me the worst of it; If your threatening had been dismal and frightful; If I had had no reasonable ground to believe them tolerable, or else that they would never be Executed; I should certainly have abandoned my corruptions, and never have enjoyed a pleasant hour till I had cut off my right hand, or plucked out my right eye; but now these subterges are all prevented.

2. The threatnings of the Gospel are reasonable, because they are avoidable. *Paradise*
was

Mat. 25. 34
 41. was prepared for Man ; *Hell* for the Devil and
 his Angels. It is the grief of Almighty God that
 Ezck. 18. Men will hug & embrace their misery, and fall
 23.
 Ezck. 33. in love with Torment. Had God indeed out of a
 11.
 Luk. 19. 41 partial kindness to some few, bestowed Eternal
 Bliss & Happiness upon them, and thereby made
 Heaven their fate, their desitiny and not their
Reward ; and had He decreed the rest to Eter-
 nal ruine, and thereby made Himself the Author
 both of their Sin and destruction ; I should
 most easily be deriwaded to renounce my Pro-
 position, and doubt my Religion too, since *He-
 rod, Nero, Dioclesian* and *Maximilian*, with the
 rest of the Tyrant Persecutors of Innocence,
 and of this Religion, had been the most brave
 and worthy Men, because the most Pious Imita-
 tors of their God ; and therefore had better
 deserved a Saintship then the holy Martyrs, who
 would have been only *Witnesses* of their own
 folly. But on the contrary, since Heaven and
 Hell are set before us ; And the latter, not out
 of the least design that we should suffer the mi-
 sery of it, but contrary wise, to prevent it. It
 evidently followvs, that not only the threatnings
 themselves, but the execution of them too are
 reasonable ; since it is no more then vvhat vve
 chuse : And is it not pity that vve should mis-
 of that, for vvich vve toil, and drudge, and la-
 bour.

bour. And we shall find at the day of Judgment, the mouths of sinners will be stopped, so that they shall have nothing to answer to Almighty God when He shall appeal to them, as He did to the Children of *Israel*, *Are not my ways equal?* Whether God will, or cannot suspend the severest execution of these Threatnings is not necessary to inquire into; but this we may conclude, that no man (especially a wicked Man) can reasonably expect such a redundancy of the divine Goodness, as shall make Him better than His word; since God hath nowhere been pleased to reveal it to us: And for Men to argue from the non-execution of Temporal threatnings, passed upon particular Persons, or Cities, or Nations in this life, to the mitigation or non-execution of those which relate to the other, is not good arguing; because here the Hands of the Almighty may be stayed by Repentance; but in Hell there can be no such thing. Nor is there one Instance throughout the Bible where God did repent Him of the Evil, unless they repented them of the Sin. And it is so far from being a Virtue, that it is an imperfection in a good Man, to threaten and not to punish, unless the reason of his threatening be taken away. This is only spoken by the by, to show that wicked Men

Mat. 22. 12

Rom. 3. 19.

have little reason to please themselves with this contemplation, that God will be better than his word. And now I have considered the Christian Religion it self; and I hope we perceive it worthy to be entertained by all rational men.

Especially in the third and last place, if we consider the ultimate end and design thereof, as it relates to us, which is our own happiness, with the natural tendency of the means propounded to attain the end.

If a Man doth but intend my happiness, I am bound in honour and gratitude to love him for that; and his designs of love and kindness are sufficient to justify my hearkning to his Councils: But if I find that the means and methods which he lays down, do naturally tend to produce the end; then am I bound in reason, as I tender my own happiness, to embrace and vigorously pursue them. But the design of God and our Saviour, in the planting of the Christian Religion, was to make all men happy; by turning us from our iniquities to the wisdom of the Just; by conforming our minds to the Eternal Laws of Righteousness: And this is that account which St. Paul gives us in the 2d. of *Timus*, from the 12th to the last. And this will be obvious to any man who reads our Saviours Sermon upon the Mount. And this is a design

Acts 3. 26.
Mat. 1. 21.
Luke 1. 17

Mat. 5.

design which is truly worthy of God, and most
 advantageous unto us ; because Sin and Wick-
 edness, from which it designs to deliver us, are
 the worst of evils ; it is that which is most un-
 like our Maker ; it is the only thing which de-
 grades and transforms us into Beasts ; who are
 naturally so much inferiour to us ; and some
 sins make us like the Devil. But on the con-
 trary, Holiness or Goodness (with which the
 Gospel designs to endow us) is the best of
 blessings, because it is the very Image of God,
 the life and health of our Souls, the peace of
 our lives ; which only can give a Relish to
 whatsoever else we do enjoy. It is Heaven in
 other words, which doth not consist so much
 in beholding the glory of God, or in adoring
 the divine Attributes, or in continual Songs of
 Praise (though this shall be our employment
 too) but that which makes it Heaven to us, is
 the conformity of our Souls to God, and a par-
 ticipation of His perfections. What therefore
 can be more noble and generous then this de-
 sign ? And besides the conviction of our own
 minds, and the natural possibility of attaining
 the thing, our Saviour hath omitted no acciden-
 tal means and advantages, whereby to inflame
 our desires, or assist our endeavours in the pur-
 suance of this our happiness. He lived Him-

Rom. 12.
11.

Psal. 49. 20
James 3.
14, 15.

Eph 4. 23.
24.

Psal. 119.
165.

Eph. 4. 8.
Acts 2. 4.

Mat. 28. 19
20.

John 16.
Phil. 2. 12.

self above 30 years on Earth, to show us the possibility of the thing, by an excellent Example. And after his departure hence, He endowed His immediate Ministers with supernatural gifts, for the planting of this Religion in all the parts of the Earth ; and hath appointed an order of Men to Preach the same to the end of the World. And more then this, He hath sent the Comforter to abide in His Church for ever, to work this excellent work within us, and to do the whole business for us, excepting only, that He forces no Mans will, that so our Christian Spirit, and our Pious Conversation may become a Virtue capable of Reward, by being the Result of our own Choice. Those therefore who will not suffer the design of the Gospel to take effect upon them ; notwithstanding all these advantages, will find cause enough at the great day, to confess their Destruction was of themselves. And now from all that I have said, I hope it doth sufficiently appear, that to embrace the Christian Religion is highly agreeable to the dictates of right reason. No wonder then that the solemnity of the Tabernacles was mis-timed by the *Jews*, at the approach of our Saviour, as upon this day to *Jerusalem*. It had been but an ordinary expression of gladness, if the Trees of the field

field *themselves* had clapt their hands for joy ;
 since no *Hosannahs* can be loud enough to pray
 unto God and our Saviour , whose Doctrine Tit. 2. 13,
12.
 brings *Salvation* to all Men.

And now I should come to make some Inferences ; but I will be very brief.

1. How strong is the Argument from the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, to a pious and holy Conversation ?

And Secondly, How irrational and unmanly a thing it is to be wicked ; since such is the goodness and equity of the Divine Law, that it is impossible to be a transgressor and a man at the same time ? There can be nothing objected against the entertainment and practise of the Christian Religion , unless you will imagine that God is infinitely more kind to Brutes than he is to us ; and that it was a great unkindness to make us reasonable and understanding Creatures. That Beasts are truly objects of our envy, because their sensual capacities are larger than our own. If we thought it our happiness that we are created men, we should soon become good Christians, because the Christian Religion is reasonable.

3. If my Proposition be true, then we see what false and unworthy notions they have of God, who take Him to be a Tyrant Law-giver ;
and

and of Religion, who imagine their reason is not at all concerned in it. Since it is impossible we should understand that there is a God, that there is any such thing as Religion, that the Scriptures are Divinely inspired, &c. without the use of our discursive faculties. Nothing, undoubtedly, hath done so great disservice to the Christian Religion, as Enthusiasm; when Men do therefore dis-believe Propositions, because they may be understood: When they never imagine themselves to be Orthodox Christians, till they have transubstantiated the common Creed into unaccountable and inexplicable Problems; and never believe themselves to be good Men, till they have brought their Bodies and Minds into that frame, that they can with ease be extatical in all their devotions and expressions of Religion. Prophaneness is a bare-fac'd enemy; but this doth secretly undermine Christianity. This condemns the parties affected to perpetual Ignorance; which is never more effectually done, then by dethroning our understanding, and a high conceit of our own fancies; both which are the inevitable consequences of Enthusiasm. But the Injury is yet greater to the Religion in the main; because it naturally tends to hinder Infidels from embracing it: If they are ignorant

ignorant they will rather continue in the Profession and Practice of what they have been used to, then entertain a Novelty which they can never be made to apprehend. If they be wise, then will they account it an affront, to propound a *Theorem* to be believed by them; whereof there can be rendred no rational account. But who can object against *this Religion*, when God is represented as a Loving Father, who heartily desires our Happiness, and is willing and able to effect it? and therefore commands us nothing but what we ourselves, whether we will or no, must be forced to confess is equal, just and reasonable; withall, propounding and promising great rewards for small services. Is not this more like to gain Profelytes, then to make hard uncouth, unaccountable representations of God, and of Religion to the World. Will not all wise Men, as they *are such*, have a natural Antipathy to flat contradictions, and unworthy notions of God; they can believe nothing, as revealed, which contradicts what they know of God, if He had never been pleased to reveal His mind at all.

Lastly, Is the Christian Religion Reasonable, then, as we desire to be wiser Men than others, so let us endeavour to be better Christians than others.

others are ; upon the same account that we desire to improve in Knowledge and Learning, should we also desire to improve in Piety and Virtue : since this is one of the best demonstrations that can be given of our being wise and rational Men. Let us then express one grateful sense of the Divine Love, in giving us such generous and easie Laws ; by our hearty endeavours, with all exactness, to transcribe our Saviours copy into our own Lives : that so at last we may not fail to be made partakers of those inexpressible rewards which are laid up for those that love and fear Him. *Now to the one Eternal, only Wise and Incomprehensible God, our Lord, and the blessed Spirit, be given all Honour, Adoration and Obedience, now and for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

P. 3. l. 16. r. *remedy*, l. 23, r. *meaning*, p. 17. l. 3. r. *Eternal*,
p. 18. l. 7. r. *of love*, p. 28. l. 4, r. *eternal*, l. 13, r. *nor*, p. 23. l. 7.
r. *destiny*.